January 09, 2015

Dear Superintendents, Principals, Business Managers, and Technology Directors,

As many of you are aware, the state received an adverse ruling in the long-standing lawsuit filed by Syringa Networks against the State of Idaho, impacting the Idaho Education Network (IEN). Until a final judgment is issued by the District Court, the network remains operational. In the meantime, IEN staff, state attorneys, Governor's office staff, the Idaho State Department of Education, the IEN Program Resource Advisory Council, and state legislative leadership are working together to determine options for moving forward and maintaining network services. We are committed to finding a way to maintain uninterrupted services to our schools so that these matters do not distract from the important work taking place in our classrooms.

In the event that the state may not be able to provide network services as a state consortium next fiscal year, we are recommending that school districts begin the process of identifying a network service provider that would be eligible for E-Rate reimbursement. While this should not be interpreted as an indication that the network is being dissolved, we do want to be proactive about ensuring that Idaho school districts are held harmless no matter the outcome of legal or legislative action.

As a contingency, we recommend school districts file a Form 470 with the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) announcing a competitive bidding process. Then, in accordance with local school board procurement requirements, the district should issue a bid for all E-Rate eligible services they plan to purchase during state fiscal year 2016 (federal fiscal year 2015). The Form 470 must be posted on USAC's website for at least 28 days before a district can close its bidding process.

Districts will be advised to finish the process by entering a short-term agreement (one-year or month-to-month) and filing a Form 471 (filing window January 14-March 26) to apply for E-Rate discounts if the state is unable to file for E-Rate eligibility as a consortium or fund the network in its entirety.

However, if the state files for E-Rate eligibility as a consortium, the IEN will request school districts submit Letters of Agency (LOAs) to the state, in order for the IEN to file a Form 471 on behalf of the districts and provide E-Rate eligible network services, as has been done in years past.

Please consider contacting your legislators to educate them on the ways your district uses the IEN, including the impact it has on your budget, the quality of service, and the ancillary benefits your receive. Additionally, talk to your local administrators about what the network is and how your schools use the services. Administrators will likely be asked about the importance of the IEN in their district, and it will be imperative that they are able to speak knowledgeably about the impacts.

For more information or assistance with E-Rate questions, please contact Brady Kraft, IEN Technical Director, at brady.kraft@ien.idaho.gov or (208) 332-1840. Additionally, you may contact one of the Idaho Education Technology Association (IETA) board members listed below:

William Goodman	President	wgoodman@idahotechtalk.org
Keven Denton	President - Elect	kdenton@idahotechtalk.org
Steve Schellenberg	President - Past	sschellenberg@idahotechtalk.org
Simon Miller	Representative - Region I	smiller@idahotechtalk.org
Norman Rudy	Representative - Region II	nrudy@lewistonschools.net
Ryan Gravette	Representative - Region III	rgravette@idahotechtalk.org
John Neely	Representative - Region IV	jneely@idahotechtalk.org
John Cockett	Representative - Region V	jcockett@idahotechtalk.org
Camille Wood	Representative - Region VI	cwood@idahotechtalk.org
Rosann Mathews	Special Representative	rmathews@idahotechtalk.org

Sincerely,

Keven L. Denton

Keven Denton
President-Elect
IETA

William Goodman
Chief Technology Officer
State Department of Education

Teresa Luna
Director
Department of Administration